

**Bojan Žikić**

*Department of Ethnology and Anthropology  
Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade, Serbia  
bzikic@f.bg.ac.rs*

## **Why Do We Need Misanthropology in Anthropology? An Exploratory Essay in Deliberating the Research Subfield<sup>1</sup>**

**Abstract:** Building up on Morson's idea of misanthropology as the study of the cussedness of human nature I limit that notion to human social and cultural life, suggesting that misanthropology should be considered as misery inflicted upon humans by humans through mediation of society and culture. It is a plea for anthropological investigations into whatever is opposed either to our cultural notion of *humanitas*, or to what is considered as a virtue in any given social or cultural context. I argue that such context could be crucial in understanding of what is locally thought of as morally, good, or positive, as well of what is opposed to these, but also that any such particular conception should not prevent anthropologists from considering human suffering as an objective and not just contextually dependable fact.

**Key words:** misanthropology, *humanitas*, virtue, atrocity, society and culture

### Introduction

Ramifications that brought us from early studies in folk-mythologies, ethnology, or physical traits as proof of the unity of the mankind, to vast realm of sub-disciplinary fields of recent day anthropology tend to obscure somehow the principle question of our discipline: what is human, both according to his/her social and cultural surroundings and practices, and according to the inner capacities of this creature to be sentient. Many researchers would disagree with posing this question as the overall aim of their investigations, but it is not in the name of the discipline only: what we the anthropologists all try to do, no matter methods or objects of our studies, is to contribute to understanding of

---

<sup>1</sup> Result of a research project 177018, funded by Serbian Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development.

human conditions. Why people engage in one ritual or another and what does it mean, why their institutions look like they do, what is the background for the way their economic transactions are maintained etc, etc, all of that provide scattering parts of the answers to the questions how and why people think and behave. Psychology, neurology, brain and cognitive sciences among others also have considerations for those questions. I would dare to say that basic description of the ethological side of humanity is modes of our thinking and behaving. Anthropological concerns lay in social and cultural folders of human thought and behaviour obviously.

We tend to see society and culture as human products, both reflections of the inner essence of being human and preconditions for being so<sup>2</sup>. But our view is underlined by some bias, that there is certain yet indefinable inherent nobility, goodness or whatever may serve as the apotheosis of *positive*, which makes the essence of our humanity as well humanity in general. That means that at the end, we either see or postulate that community values should reflect *the positive* as the core essence of their producers and benefactors, or that such values are in some kind of collision with that core essence<sup>3</sup>. It is what inspires and guides us toward everlasting questioning of our social and cultural norms, and upgrading them to meet the standards of our social living which we always try to keep as high as it is possible. Yet not everybody thinks and act the same way in the same social surrounding and do not embrace eagerly what is discursively put as positive. We usually do not take into consideration that human ideas and actions have no inherent values by themselves – they gain meaning in some context of their occurrence – and that indeed many of them are not just part of that paved path to hell; many of ways humans think and do something are as far from our notion of the positive, and I am not talking about Nazism, even it could be included in what I consider as the object of misanthropology, but I have on my mind ideas and actions of the common people in their everyday surrounding, in their everyday life. Some of these are observed by the anthropologist and other social scientist but not in the form I like to suggest.

We are very well informed and aware for example about sexual and gender discrimination, class oppression, racism, structural violence, abuse of medical science and many other things that are part of cultural history of our civilisation, and even part of the cultural present in many contemporary societies (Cf. Vinh-Kim and Peschard 2003, Dickey 1993, Farmer 1997, Lyon-Callo 2004,

---

<sup>2</sup> Or at least I see social/cultural anthropology tends to explain its task in a manner like that.

<sup>3</sup> Bošković claims explicitly for example that it is in human nature that human beings mostly do not want to harm others and that despising the others, dehumanizing them etc. is part of our nurture, which of course happens within society and culture, Bošković 2014, 11–12.

Singer 2004, Farmer et al. 2006)<sup>4</sup>. Explanations of the causes for things like that always refer to some standpoint oriented by our bias toward the positive side of humanity, rendering them as deviant. I do not object considering anything of the previously mentioned as deviant, but would like to point again to the fact that classifying something as deviant is relational act necessarily. In order to mark something as deviant, or to say that something is negatively valued, one must know what is contrary to deviant, let's say it, what is normal, or good, or right, that is – what is positive. Either of the terms, *positive* and *negative*, are socially and culturally produced or constructed that way. Basically, we know about good and evil after we are taught upon them and we are taught upon them according to some moral teaching, which has its roots in religion<sup>5</sup>. Religion and morality are cultural forms, or constructs, obviously, as are our notions of the positive being inherent to human essence.

But the deviance is not solely cultural construct, as it would be comfortable if it is so. Many human actions are attributed as being deviant in medicine, psychiatry, or criminology, and I am not talking about labelling some sexual conduct as deviant, or the deviancy from the biological norm of the structure of human body. On the other hand, normality could be seen the same way: although the anthropologists are prone to contribute it to Society and Culture, it could not be disregarded that what is considered as normal human behaviour also has its roots in human biology and neurology. All of that means nothing but the cultural constructs are not always disconnected from our biology; capacity for what is known as good and bad, positive and negative etc. in human actions is our inner trait, as well as the consequences of those actions are observed in social and cultural norms, relations, institutions and so on. My point is that misanthropology may be devoted mainly to the other side of the core essence of humanity as displayed socially and culturally, but that we must be aware that the way our world looks like reflects what we humans are build like by our nature also, not only by our culture.

---

<sup>4</sup> Please have in mind that solely anthropological writing on these topics is numerous and that I list here only those which were next to me while writing this text.

<sup>5</sup> I step upon psychologist Baron-Cohen's dismissal of religious concept of evil as not scientific one in his significant attempt to make closer to general academic public scientific research on empathy and cruelty (Baron-Koen 2012, 130). Yet the experience of the Western civilization as well the numerous ethnographic accounts on non-Western societies since the dawn of anthropology suggest that morality is essentially build upon religion, or at least I understood it so reading large part of anthropological opus on religion between for example Radcliffe-Brown 1945 and Lambek 2000; and religion usually informs us that its task is to free men from the evil, help men fighting or overcoming it and so on, putting in fact man in center of its concerns with evil. Ricoeur saw it as it is religious concept that evil is in core essence of man (Ricoeur 1969, 3, 49, 82).

## Delineating the notion of misanthropology

I will build my case upon the term coined by Morson and the debris of concept implied by it<sup>6</sup>. His initial definition is that misanthropology is the study of the cussedness of human nature, deriving its scope out of misanthropy, but including latter in that scope among many others possible yet unnamed “human vices” (Morson 1996, 59). For Morson, misanthropology should rely on practical reasoning rather than on theoretical grasp, because the questions it should rise come from accumulated experience and suspiciousness for theorising for its own sake (ibid, 61). Morson is not an anthropologist in a manner that he practices academic discipline of social, cultural, physical, or whatever anthropology assumed in university curricula, and somebody could object perhaps that his notion of anthropology – similar to those in classical philosophy or Christian theology – is of rather speculative kind, that it is directed towards some general knowledge of the place, purpose, and sense of the human existence in Universe. Nonetheless, his view should be considered as relevant for anthropology in more strict sense. It is not that he is interested in human nature for its sake, but in its relatedness to society. Social aspects of human nature and something in human nature which influences society to be like it is are what lay beyond his interest in misanthropology.

That is way one of crucial early goals in establishing misanthropology as an anthropological sub-discipline should be making ethnographies of misanthropology: noting examples of what is assumed to be misanthropological in different social and cultural contexts, in order to show both that there are misanthropology examples common to many different contexts, as well those which are restricted to one context or some of them. Take a look at functionalist theory according to Malinowski for an example. There is certain number of basic human needs, i.e. things without which human biological existence is not possible (Malinowski 1948, 280)<sup>7</sup>. One of them is need for food. There is no man or woman who could survive without eating. Yet, eating is nowhere completely free: one must either pay for his/her meal, or earn it otherwise – by doing some job for it – or work for it by him/herself – for example, cultivate the plants or keep the livestock, or else. If the last case – growing one’s own food – falls out of my consideration, because it is true that it is not completely free, it needs

---

<sup>6</sup> As far as I am aware, Morson did not push elaboration of misanthropology any further, nor anybody else took into consideration developing it theoretically.

<sup>7</sup> Malinowski has just listed those there, while pointed towards his article “Culture,” in the *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, vol. 4, pp. 621–645, 1931, New York: Macmillan, and in an essay on “The Group and the Individual in Functional Analysis” published in *The American Journal of Sociology* XLIV (May, 1939), pp. 938–64 for more elaborated explanation.

some kind of investment too, like for seeds, or in terms of time etc, but it does not include putting some conditions before somebody in order to provide him/her with food, I think it is clear that the most of the human beings in the world must meet some demands posted before them by some social force in order to have their meals. And it was that way through the known history.

One may ask a question, why does it matter that there is no food for free, having in mind that it is only natural that nothing is for free and that we have to earn everything in the world, being that material or not. That is the way our civilisation is, and that is the way probably we the humans are. Besides the fact that food is somehow “more basic” than the other basic needs, and that it is really substantial for existence of biological organisms prior to the other needs, there is also the matter of how humane we are if we think that even the most basic of all of the needs should not be provided unconditionally. Food is goods like any other goods, and it is socially and economically treated that way. But food is also cultural goods and could be used like any other product of symbolic thinking. Some religions prohibit consuming certain foods, making of its dietary rules norms symbolically imprinted into identities of their followers (Cf. Douglas 1966, 1970, Schieffelin 1976). Habit of not consuming some sort of food for religious reasons could be used as an identity-constructing tool to mark the identity-constructors clearly off those who do not consume pork meat for example: there are evidence from European history, as well from European present that not consuming the pork meat was or is used both as the symbol of certain cultural identity, and as a mean of symbolic purification of community<sup>8</sup>.

There is a question, again, how humane are those who think that separating one human group from another will help their group to achieve better whatever goal. But my aim is not to find the answer to that question, or to one about humane or non-humane way of thinking of getting the food. I find it sufficient to assume that there are number of ways and practices which collide with what is ordinary thought of as being humane, or just being decent human person, or being nice to other people, or being virtuous in any manner etc, all of them embedded in forms, relations, institutions, symbols of human societies and cultures. And the primary, or the most common, or the most usual assumption of human society and culture is that they either serve as a framework of satisfying basic human needs, or that they exist to help humans realise themselves best in the world, or that they give order and meaning to human thoughts and actions, inspire and determine them etc. All of that gives us sense of some kind of benevolence laying beside society and culture, thinking of them like they embody

---

<sup>8</sup> For historical accounts see Foa 2000; for contemporary issues on this matter check some of the links: <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/apr/15/le-pen-pig-whistle-politics>; <http://www.ibtimes.com/pigs-heads-left-french-mosque-why-muslims-jews-and-hindus-dont-eat-pork-737355>

some a priori positive attitude toward humans and of them, some kind of cradle of ideals, even when they are described as trying to discipline their members, they somehow are doing it for the purpose of some greater good<sup>9</sup>.

Well, whatever quality is said to be true human quality, that what is desirable for humans to think and/or act like, whatever gives us sense of pride that we are humans, or we talk about it as of something worth striving and thriving to, even whatever people use as a verbal or symbolical disguise or alibi when performing knowing that they are making other people to suffer, or with the aim to harm them, is the “theoretical” base to which the concept of misanthropology is opposed. The thought which guides social science and humanities, as well as liberal arts is inspired by conviction or belief that there is something particularly positive which is inherent to human beings in general. It is rarely named or explicitly defined, but it is always assumed as a virtue of some special kind. Maybe I can put it this way – it is virtue in itself what is conceived to be the determinant of humanity, whatever that may mean really and in each particular situation or context. I will regard it as *humanitas* here, at least in a sense Bidney used it (Bidney 1996, 402). And misanthropology is meant to be the study of quite opposite qualities which I am convinced are also to be found as inherent to humans, in their social and cultural expressions. Or let me put it this way: we think, or we just want to believe that form of binary dualism in thinking about human beings and their concepts and deeds is really based on good opposing to no-good in categorical reasoning and practical actions. So why we experience then that our societies and their cultures – or maybe any given society or culture – do not work that way?

### Object of misanthropology as what is opposed to *humanitas*

No matter that all of the examples could go down to the argument that “we/my/ours thought/action is good”, the point is that there always exists some socially/culturally constructed “good”, which is easily thought of as some kind of human essence, which in turn is projected to the social world, and which is only taken into consideration of how to organise our lives and our communities, being used as an overall ontological and consequently social ideal. Basically, humans tend to believe that they are good, and that goodness of theirs is usually explained as a virtue, and that things, i.e. concepts like that are what determine their humanity. I would not go that far to claim that there are no “good” and “no-

<sup>9</sup> This view is rather Durkheimian and it could be disputed of course (Cf. Durkheim 2012, Laidlaw 2002), which I am doing here as a matter a fact, but it could hardly be denied as kind of a description of how we tend to perceive society, or at least how we are taught to do so

good”, that they are constructs only, no matter being aware that moral is product of culture (Cf. Heintz 2013). My point is that human being, and human society and culture accordingly, could all be defined by concepts opposite to “positive”, “good”, or “virtue”, altogether by with concepts like “positive”, “good”, or “virtue”, and that *humanitas* of anthropology and in social science and humanities in general, lacks conceptual framework for doing so. I hope that misanthropology could serve that purpose.

Misanthropology should not be understood like some kind of reverse anthropology or so. It may develop its own theoretical and methodological premises in due time, like it happens in disciplinary subfields here and now, but for the moment let its own characteristic be the subfield in itself, determined by the object of its study. That object in turn is defined by being opposite to *humanitas* of anthropology and social science and humanities. If we take that the concept of *humanitas* is guided or inspired by the notion of virtue, then the object of misanthropology is guided or inspired by the notion of atrocity. I am aware that one could object about those notions being used arbitrary, without precise and more contextually embedded meaning. My answer is that those notions are derived after the concepts of “good” and “no-good”<sup>10</sup>, which exists in every society and in each culture we know about as the anthropologists, and that they serve as signifiers for thoughts and actions which are considered as belonging to the concepts of “good” and “no-good”. Again, one may object that although the presence of those concepts is universal or almost universal, their contents may vary across the cultures, but I do not think that such variations are substantial: wherever concepts of “good” and “no-good” are to be found, people define their own humanity according to the concept of “good”, and according to the notion(s) of virtue derived thereafter (Cf. Stroup 2014).

There is where in search for the “cussedness of human nature” and for the atrocities which results therefore we should relate to particular cultural contexts in which either “goodness of human nature” and virtues inherent to it are defined or there is pretty strong cultural agreement about what such virtues should be without clear definitions. Object of misanthropology is necessarily related to virtue, or to concept of “good”, so in order to know what exactly the misanthropologist is about to study, we need to know what people among who we research hold for a virtue or a goodness. It means that the object of misanthropology needs to be defined in some particular cultural context and in a relation to some

---

<sup>10</sup> I choose not to use term “evil” because I wanted to avoid any religious, theological, or even philosophical implications. Following the “tradition” in anthropology since structural anthropologists to mark the opposite pair of the binary opposition as negation of the initial pair of opposition, I chose term “no-good”. I wanted to stress the significance of the concept of “good” and related notions for trying to define the object of misanthropology as something which is opposite to all of those, yet related to them.

other, preceding concepts. Does it confront the idea that virtue and atrocity are universal characteristics of human societies and their cultures? I do not think so. Let us consider waging the war for example – and put aside the crimes committed in war, like raping, killing civilians, burning homes, stealing property, displacing people etc. No matter if there were the attempts to resolve the conflict peacefully or not, once the war started, sides involved will construct the positive image of it: defending one's own country, one's people, customs, way of living, taking the dictator down, bringing freedom to people etc. Besides the usual public displayed affinity for certain virtues in circumstances like that, like bravery, solidarity, dedication, one's particular social or cultural virtues will be constructed to become the target for enemy's atrocities. It is not only that enemy will be constructed to be displayed as the incarnation of vileness, wickedness, corruption, but that what it is considered as virtues by the enemy, will be transformed into the origin of and the inspiration for its atrocities<sup>11</sup> (Cf. Çetinkaya 2014, Bax 1997).

By observing such unfortunate occasion we can learn about what people of some community consider as a virtue, and what they consider as an atrocity. Note that if we for example learn about virtues of some "A" by paying attention to discourse of that community, we will also learn about what "atrocity" means for them through the same discourse. Atrocity of their enemies will not be seen among "A" just as result of how their enemies think about something and act accordingly, but as opposite to the virtue of "A", to their values, their ways, their notion of what is good and positive. And one not need to look after "atrocity" and "enemies" in a clear sense; it is sufficient to think of how migrations of people of non-European origin affect public discourses on "culture" (meaning "our culture" usually) of the European countries (Cf. De Graeve 2015).

Misanthropology needs also to be comparative subfield of research, the same as anthropology is. If we hope – and I stress "if" – that something really could be learnt about cussedness, or the dark side of the human nature, it should be done by learning from the particular cases, not merely by theorising. And we ought not to engage into inquisitions about individual motives, behaviour, or condition responsible for producing case-studies of misanthropology. Misanthropology should be performed according to social and cultural presence of atrocity. The way social or cultural anthropology learns of human nature and contributes to the general understanding of it by my opinion is only by investigations of the manifestations of human nature – or: human spirit, genius, mind etc – through human society and culture.

---

<sup>11</sup> More to that, culture obliges sometime to act as seeking violent vengeance towards the perceived enemy, when it is considered as a duty to shed enemies blood; obviously performing such duty is central to certain social role somebody occupies in his/her community, Cf. Vukomanović 1992, ten Dam 2010.



## Misanthropy below the radar of social institutions and customary life in culture

But here we must be careful in restraining research from not restricting its object solely to misanthropological manifestations obviously produced within and by the institutions of society or norms and mores of culture. I do not have on mind only general level of discussing misanthropological issues, like the food example, nor more contextually related examples like persecution of Jews throughout European history. It is clear that while obtaining and providing the food is rooted in human economic activities which are everywhere sanctioned by more or less codified, written or remembered laws and rules, and that the persecution of Jews has everywhere in Europe been inspired or even organised by the institutions of society (governments) and culture (church), that there misanthropological thoughts and activities which do not originate from the institutional side of society or culture, but nevertheless are social or cultural manifestations. Take for example reactions of numerous people on Internet to public self-display of disfigured persons, where former are expressing their displeasure or even annoyance by the appearance of latter, based on their non-conforming to presumed standards of beauty, or to presumed biological “norm” of human body<sup>12</sup>.

It is true that such reactions can hardly be part of some “official” discourse of any Western culture. Appraisal of those who did their best and get their success against the all odds, together with compassion for those who are disabled in a way that prevents them from living like the most other people do but encouraging them to do their best should be considered as virtues, and we have all been taught when we were children that it is ugly, or just no polite to make fun of people for their mental or physical disabilities or differences. Yet not insignificant number of people found themselves annoyed, or even enraged with the sole public appearances of persons like Lizzie Velázquez and cope to find social or cultural ways and tools to express that. One may argue that there are no cultural traits in behaviour like that, or in the mode of thinking beside that behaviour, maybe trying to connect it to evolutionary or/and psychological matters, but norms of culture do not display themselves openly always. It is not my aim right now to discuss possible evolutionary clues for behaviour which I designated as misanthropological, even if there are studies in evolutionary anthropology or psychology which suggest something similar to that notion<sup>13</sup>. Besides I use the

---

<sup>12</sup> The case of Lizzie Velázquez speaks for them all, see for example <http://www.bbc.com/news/blogs-ouch-30948179>, or <http://www.people.com/article/lizzie-velasquez-brave-heart-film>, or (in Serbian) [http://www.b92.net/superzena/komentari.php?nav\\_id=854382](http://www.b92.net/superzena/komentari.php?nav_id=854382) (all web-sites last approached in May 2015).

<sup>13</sup> An interesting contribution on similar matter is that of Gangestad and Scheyd.

term “misanthropology” to denote social and/or cultural thinking and acting, I do not find it to be product of institutions of society and culture only. There are rules and norms which people feel obliged to abide even when there is no code of laws behind them.

It is so with public disapproval of disfigured persons contrary not just to the laws which guarantee every human being the same rights, but also to public discourses presumed by those laws and intended by both the politicians and the policy makers. By terminology of “classical” German folkloristics, there are two kinds of processes responsible for creating the forms of folklore. One of them comes from the social elite, another one from the common people. The first is described as “coming from above”, the latter as “coming from below” (Bausinger 1969). That what “comes from below” is similar to the idioculture or culture of the small groups (Fine 1979) although neither concept matches exactly the case displayed here. The point is that numerous ways of behaving within a society or a culture is not inspired by or not conform to either what could be thought of as an official ideology, or the dominant and desirable ideology. Many of such behaviours contribute significantly to the study of misanthropology, and among them, some are more obvious candidates for so than the other. Football hooligans make the clear example. Their presence in societies and cultures where hating and hurting people are publicly disgusted and subject to criminal persecution suggests that perhaps they openly confront social laws and cultural norms (Cf. Armstrong 1998).

Question could be asked if racism is kind of a cultural norm too, as many acts of football hooliganism are guided by racist ideas. It is prohibited by law in every civilised society, but not only it is part of the cultural history of the West, it is also part of the culture of common people nowadays this way or another (Cf. Bošković 2006). Nevertheless, racism is one the first things which will come across the mind of anybody when asked about the object of misanthropology, and most of the people with racist convictions will hold themselves from openly displaying it. That obviously is not the same with internet- and media haters of disfigured persons, no matter what is said above about the dominant discourse on behaviour towards such persons in Western cultures. That is the way it is maybe for some reasons out the bounds from the scope of social/cultural anthropology, but I think mainly for our cultures pressure us with some ideas and notions on body shape, size, beauty etc, which we adopt and think of them either as if they are biologically normal, or like they present ideals worth giving all to reach (Cf. Reischer and Koo 2004). Both way, people somehow tend to think of those body-norms as of obligatory: if they represent “normality” of human physical appearance, then those falling out of the bonds of those norms are to be considered as “abnormal”; if they represent some kind of a goal, then those who could not compete for that goal are to be considered as “unworthy”.

This perspective suggest that people who are openly disgusted by the self-display of disfigured persons, contrary to football hooligans, see themselves as cultural-abiding people; they are conforming what they understand as the cultural norm, and by doing so, they probably think of themselves as of somebody contributing to the cultural cohesion of the community. Yet their thinking and behaving are misanthropological the same way that are thinking and behaving of racists, or of those who persecuted Jews. It does not mean by any sense that people who dislike Lizzie Velázquez on Internet would harm her physically or psychologically or even try to avoid her company in real life, nor is their act of displaying disapproval of her the same thing as is burning other people's houses. On the other hand, no matter how much malevolency could be each of these acts be accounted for, their intent and result is bringing misery to other people, which brings us to the questions if mistreatment of other people, bringing misery upon them, hurting them or so are parts of the definition of the object of misanthropology, and if each case of such acting towards other people – which also has to be attributed to the thought of the same kind – should be considered as the part of the object of misanthropology.

Let me first briefly discuss the second question. Above all, my intention is to establish the field of misanthropology studies as produced by social and cultural thought and behaviour. It is presented in this text above that principle levels of the social and cultural thinking and behaving considered as misanthropological could be observed as: human civilisation; institutions, rules, laws and norms of some particular society and culture; cultural norms within some community which are inconsistent with those norms reproduced, maintained, and encouraged by public discourses of that community. Put that way, where does belong schoolyard bullying, or keen observations of other people mishaps or misfortune without intention of at least giving them a hand or comfort? My opinion is that there are too many examples like that in everyday life which could easily be attributed to that last level by finding the cultural norm which inspired them, or discarded due to being described as random, individual acts with no clear link to any cohesive cultural thought. I hold that the ethnography of misanthropology is necessary, but that collected examples should fit to one of those principle levels of observation, and that they must meet the basic demand of being kind of an atrocity, opposed to culturally presumed virtue, or being part of the “no-good” concept standing against culturally defined concept of “good”.

That is at least partly answered the question of what elements to use to define the object of misanthropology. Way of thinking and/or behaving which is intrinsic to or is the result of norms and institutions of society and culture, which produces or provokes atrocity of any kind – by which I mean any thought or deed opposite to presumed virtues of a given society or a culture – should be rendered to as an object of misanthropology studies. Maybe one day this kind

of defining such object will prove inadequate, but for the moment – or as kind of a starter – it will serve the purpose. This definition demands that the object of misanthropology studies should be looked upon in some particular social or cultural context and in relation to the notions of virtue inherent to that context. It is not as far from Morson's definition as a matter of fact. Cussedness is implied by the concept of an atrocity versus the virtue, while the human nature is what stands behind society and culture: those are what we are, as good altogether with as no-good as is what conceived and realised them.

### The objectivity of human suffering and misery and relativity in anthropology's thought

It is clear that work on describing each particular object of misanthropology includes reviewing notions of virtue in a particular context. But should we rely completely to the concepts of "good" produced by some cultural context we intend to research misanthropology within it? Should we treat as a virtue everything declared so in any given culture? After all, could not we look the anthropology as a mean to challenge the ideas of what is good or bad (Widlok 2004, 53)? What if in some cultures killing enemies who surrendered themselves is considered as a virtue, or what about whipping and stoning women who committed adultery or simply do not behave the way their community thinks they must and thinks of that as of a virtue (Cf. Winkelmann 1998, Pavlovitch 2010)? Obviously certain correction is needed in a definition of the object of misanthropology as something contextually opposed to the concept of "good". At some initial level of study, or in certain cases, we can say that it is enough to observe what is meant by virtue in a particular cultural context. At some point, as in case where physical punishment of women for (not) wearing particular clothes is considered locally as something normal, something which belong to the concept of "good", it is hard if impossible to expect that researcher will rest his/her case on determining what is virtue there, satisfied that concept of "good" is revealed to some extent.

What reliable tool for establishing the object of the misanthropological research is then at the disposal of the researcher, or better – is there any such tool? Yes there is, but it will be as far as it is possible from the ethical orthodoxy of nowadays anthropology, yet not so inconvenient to some other disciplines, and to the thought which guides policy makers or politicians; it is making some standard from one's own society or culture as kind of a referent point in making decisions about what to consider as an atrocity and what as a virtue in a particular context, where notions of atrocity and virtue are dramatically different from those the researcher will defend ultimately, as an individual – private

citizen, as well as an anthropologist. This path is dangerous, obviously, but I think that it is deprived from hypocrisy at least. There are numerous of stands, attitudes, beliefs, convictions that we the anthropologists consider as kind of a civilisation values, not attributing them to any particular society or its culture, but wanting to believe that they serve as a sign of what human society and culture should and maybe could be, their relations and institutions included. It is not part of any particular political stance although it is influenced by different ideologies throughout history of political thought and moral reasoning, and it is overwhelming in our public expressions. Am I wrong to say that for example disgust toward: discrimination of any kind, or violence, or humiliation in any case is no less part of our anthropological orthodoxy as is respect for any given culture in the world?

I can put it this way also – when in doubt if something locally considered as a virtue in order to determine what to study misanthropologically as an atrocity is in conflict with your anthropological stance on the dignity and wellbeing of human beings, consult United Nations charters on for example: human rights; rights of children, women, senior citizens, different minorities; food, sheltering, water, health and so on<sup>14</sup>. I think it would be really hard if impossible to find an anthropologist arguing in favour of clitoridectomy or lapot<sup>15</sup> for example, no matter how fond him/herself became to certain culture or how much respect has developed for its ways (Cf. Silverman 2004). But do not think that this is advocacy of crusade of any kind. It is true that provoking social response is a vocation of social science and humanities, but before even try to discuss anything near to it, I would like to establish an anthropological subfield dedicated to documenting and analysing parts of human social and cultural thinking and behaviour which are usually neglected contribution to forming our society and culture.

I find this approach also helpful when it is about contemporary societies of the West, which are not so culturally uniform or ideologically consensual as the most of the societies the tradition of anthropological field research is built upon within. Certain referent point is needed for sure not only when researcher's ethos is in some kind of conflict with the values of the remote communities, but

---

<sup>14</sup> I am aware that relation of the anthropologist, and mostly in the United States, to the concept of human rights as defined by the United Nations has been uneasy and ethically questionable (Cf. Engle 2001, Goodale 2006), but nevertheless think that we have more than just local cultural stand on what is good/positive/desirable etc and what is not in humans and their institutions relating one to another in order to discuss issue presented here.

<sup>15</sup> *Lapot* is a form of senicide. It is largely disputed whether it actually existed or not, moreover being in conflict with the cultural practice of respecting the elderly within traditional cultures of Balkans, but it was discussed nevertheless as cultural institution in Serbian ethnology and anthropology, Cf. Georgevitch 1918, Kovač 2006.

also when such conflict exists with norms implied by the official or dominant discourses in their own surroundings. Take for example various obstacles put before an ordinary citizen by bureaucracy in demanding something which is guaranteed by law to him/her; or the requirements by all of the governments in the world concerning the rights of people designated as “foreign citizens” simple to be at the territory those governments are in charged for; or the category of “migrant workers” which mostly embraces people denied access to any legal job in the country they have migrated to; or troubles refugees, asylum seekers, and homeless people are faced with when they need healthcare services, etc (Cf. Gaibazzi 2014, Quesada et al. 2011, Marrow and Luhrmann 2012, Kelly 2012).

We the anthropologists, as well people from our social surroundings, are accustomed to taking some things from the social and cultural world we belong to as granted, almost the same way it do people whose life and mores we are researching, even if there are some anthropological accounts of the matter here described as misanthropology in Western societies. The fact that homeless or Roma people in Europe or North America are mostly out of the social and health care system is no less an observable and interpretable social phenomena, as is children prostitution in some Asian countries, or arranged marriages of little girls in many traditional communities (Cf. Žikić 2011). I am sure that many other examples could be presented if needed in order to convince anybody suspicious of feasibility of this referent point as some kind of correction to the basic demand of distinguishing between virtue and atrocity in a certain context. Foucault’s analysis on shaping the social perception of normality and Douglas’ analysis on how we shape and are shaped by the institutions of society and culture, i.e. norms of culture (Foucault 1973, Douglas 1992) suggest not only that social surroundings the contemporary anthropologists come from are not different from those surroundings “usual” anthropological researches are and have been performed in, but that both “types” of surroundings are shaped and modelled historically, by processes and acts meant to contribute to their cohesion, continuity, and progress, where some of those processes and acts are nowadays not considered the same way normal, noble or justified, they have been considered in the time of their happening.

If it is true that people with mental health problems are no more subjected to cruel treatments, and that homosexuality is not considered abnormal anymore, what about police harassment of sexual workers or injected drug users (Cf. Rhodes et al. 2008)? Neither practice is considered at least positive nowhere in the world, and in some countries it is considered as close to the notion of human aberration it could be, but do we found that brutal “disciplining” of those people should take place and in what circumstances, and what if there exists strong opinion among ordinary people that injecting drug users deserve harsh treatment by social institutions beyond any legal requirement or law (Cf. Žikić

2015)? These questions bring us to the next concern in determining the object of misanthropology: if we attribute some thinking or behaviour as the cause of atrocity, should there always be a virtue as an exactly opposite match to it, or some things could be considered as atrocity by themselves solely, related as an opposition to some perhaps fuzzy and broader part of the “good” concept?

I am afraid that I cannot offer a plausible answer for that matter and that I must admit there is certain yet to be defined point where proposed point of reference, consisting of contextually produced notions on atrocity versus virtue at one level, and of correcting confronting notions of virtue at the other, looks like starting to fade, losing its strength to delineate clearly the relation between what researcher establishes as an object of misanthropology studies according either to local culturally produced concepts of “good” and “no-good” or to correction made by researcher when local notions on virtue are dramatically confronted to his/her ethos. This last issue is hazy because there are number of situations where we “know” or “feel” that something is out of order, but we cannot say anything about that order, or we simply lack firm socio-cultural background to the notions of order and that being out of it. At what point there are differences and at what point similarities in local fitting of clitoridectomy in Africa, and brutality towards injecting drug users in Serbia to as near to the concept of “good”, if not to that concept in itself?

At glance, it looks like a matter of cultural consensus. It is as absolute as it can be in any human community for clitoridectomy, while it could be described as “mostly” or “dominant” voice on how society through its institutions should treat injecting drug users. But it is not about consensus in itself, but about what gives one. It is much easier, or at least much convenient as research conclusion, to get to the cultural consensus within the traditional communities, as in case with those here involved in issue of approving clitoridectomy for any reasons. In more complex societies it is not only opinions on some social or cultural matter will differ, but they must compete in a way, because they are more or less logical products of different thoughts developed within the culture – or even cultures of a society. Some of the competing cultural thoughts could be in conflict one to another, and I am not talking of anything else but of thoughts that inspired and influenced different discourses which are statistically and publicly relevant in a given society like (still) it is the dilemma when it is about human reproduction – which rights should be exercised one over the another in some European countries, those of the state or those of the women (Cf. Best 2005, Mishtal 2012).

Researcher’s ethos – which is culturally formed and socially shaped – could differ from the official discourse on injecting drug use voiced through judicial laws, as well from the discourse which “comes from below”; not about the nature of that habit of course, but in having sense, sometimes based on the factic-

ity obtained by research, that something is wrong with the means institutions of society deploy in fighting the injecting drug use, as well with voices “from below” asking for more strict punishment, and with the consequences for the group of people targeted and usually struck by practical consequences of those discourses. One reason for such disagreeing is low efficiency of solving the so many problems which injecting drug use bears with it, not mentioning the awareness that some of the important problems are not even touched by institutionally applied or publicly advocated strategies (Cf. Harris et al 2014, Fraser et al. 2014). But the other reason is compassionate stance which is usual part of our humanist breed and education, which sees every human suffering as not necessary and hopefully avoidable. It is not just that “What’s wrong’s the wrong that’s always in wrong”<sup>16</sup>, but understanding misery as something human beings do not deserve. Maybe they do not, yet there is misery which humans bring one upon another all around us and have done so in all of our recorded history, and I do not mean, again, some random acts or individual motives, but misery which falls upon humans as the result of our ultimate tools of seizing the world – or adjusting to it, as probably will put some researchers with different background: our society and our culture.

## Conclusion

Misanthropology is about misery inflicted upon humans by humans through mediation of society and culture. It is not just misery consisting of the vast array of by-thoughts-produced-acts, but misery as a concept embedded in thinking-for-behaving<sup>17</sup> and acting of the socially and culturally constructed persons, where “constructed” stands for how individuals are conformed to behave as agents and bearers of social and cultural norms and values, being intitulated as the representatives of social and cultural institutions, or thinking of themselves so. Such concept is opposite as it could be to that of *humanitas*, but contributes no less to the way human world looks like, historical contribution included as well as contemporary developments. Misery is where the object of misanthropology is to be found, defined within the different frame levels of its appearance as discussed above.

---

<sup>16</sup> Verse from the song “Party Fears Two”, a single by *The Associates*, published by Associates/Beggars Banquet in 1982.

<sup>17</sup> This term is obviously inspired by Slobin’s notion of thinking-for-speaking, but it has nothing to do with it in its linguistic domain, but reflects my opinion that as in language, cognition plays significant part in producing the mental-setting framework responsible for the acts I describe here as misanthropological, not knowing of course whether it could be proved or not. Cf. Slobin 2003.



Morson may be right that it is in the human nature in fact, but I doubt that there is more social/cultural anthropological contribution to that matter besides observing, noting, analysing and interpreting misanthropology in human society and culture and by them. I am sure that criminology, psychiatry, or some branches of psychology, amongst many others disciplines, not necessarily those of social science and humanities, all have to contribute to some broader and more comprehensive study of those “cussedness of human nature”, but what I propose here is the anthropological mean of contribution. It could be based on discussing already existing ethnographic reports, as well on genuine researches, where some of the studies could be described as interests for misanthropology in anthropology without placing their objects in more-or less delineated and proclaimed subfield of misanthropology (Cf. Farmer 2006). Farmer’s work on in fact institutionally caused human suffering in different parts of the world, most notably in Haiti, is maybe the most obvious example. Some others could include for example Scheper-Hughes 2008, or Panter-Brick 2002, or Long 2004 or you name it in fact.

Maybe some of those authors would not accept their work to be described as “misanthropological” or “proto-misanthropological”, or perhaps even to be linked to this concept, but after all objects of their studies fit more or less in that concept as presented here. Although I made an effort to give as much theoretical elements in an attempt to establish anthropological subfield of misanthropology as I was able to, I still agree with Morson on the object of misanthropology as a product of practical reasoning which research problems are posted more based on the social and cultural experience than on strict demands of some social science theory. That is why I consider important making misanthropology ethnographies. Those should be the next step into establishing that subfield of anthropology, after this somehow primeval discussion on how to make the debris of the concept and how to fill that frame, both with possible research problems and the basic theoretical considerations.

I feel somehow that comparative perspective on the objects of the study described as misanthropological could be more firm than those the anthropologists are seeking through performing researches within numerous subfields of the discipline, contributing that way to our general knowledge on how and why a significant part of human thought and behaviour occurs like it does in contexts the anthropologists usually research or simply live in. Yes, it is so because concepts and notions derived after *humanitas* and similar culturally evolved ideas are not the only guideline to human effectuation and achievement through society and culture, there are more sinister forces deployed also, but that is not a satisfactory answer. Studying the objects of misanthropology should serve the purpose of understanding those “sinister forces”, not only to have them listed, and why not, perhaps to really give some answers on the “cussedness of human nature”.

## References

- Armstrong, Gary. 1998. *Football Hooligans: Knowing the Score*. New York: Berg.
- Baron-Koen, Sajmon. 2012. *Psihologija zla*. Beograd: Clio (orig. Simon Baron-Cohen, *Zero Degrees of Empathy. A New Theory of Human Cruelty*, London: Allen Lane 2011).
- Bausinger, Hermann. 1969. Folklorismus in Europa: Eine Umfrage. *Zeitschrift für Volkskunde* 65: 1–8.
- Bax, Mart. 1997. Mass Graves, Stagnating Identification, and Violence: A Case Study in the Local Sources of “The War” in Bosnia Hercegovina *Anthropological Quarterly* 70 (1): 11–19.
- Best, Alyssa. 2005. Abortion Rights along the Irish-English Border and the Liminality of Women’s Experiences. *Dialectical Anthropology* 29 (3/4): 423–437.
- Bidney, David 1996. *Theoretical Anthropology. With a new introduction by Martin Bidney*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers (Second edition, orig. New York: Columbia University Press 1953).
- Bošković, Aleksandar. 2006. Balkan Ghosts Revisited. Racism – Serbian Style. *Anthropos* 101 (2): 559–564.
- Bošković, Aleksandar. 2014. *Antropološke perspektive*, Beograd: Institut društvenih nauka (engl. trans: *Perspectives in anthropology*).
- Çetinkaya, Y. Doğan. 2014. Atrocity Propaganda and the Nationalization of the Masses in the Ottoman Empire during the Balkan Wars (1912–13). *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 46 (4): 759–778.
- De Graeve, Katrien. 2015. ‘They Have Our Culture’: Negotiating Migration in Belgian–Ethiopian Transnational Adoption. *Ethnos* 80 (1): 71–90.
- Dickey, Sara. 1993. *Cinema and the Urban Poor in South India*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Douglas, Mary. 1966. *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Douglas, Mary. 1970. *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology*. Cresset Press: Barrie & Rockliff.
- Douglas, Mary. 1992. *Risk and Blame: Essays in Cultural Theory*. London: Routledge.
- Durkheim, Emile. 2012. *Sociologija i filozofija*. Zagreb: Naklada Jesenski i Turk/ Hrvatsko sociološko društvo (orig. *Sociologie et philosophie*, Paris: Librairie Félix Alcan 1924)
- Engle, Karen. 2001. From Skepticism to Embrace: Human Rights and the American Anthropological Association from 1947–99. *Human Rights Quarterly* 23(3): 536–559.
- Farmer, Paul. 1997. “On suffering and structural violence: a view from below”. In *Social suffering*, eds. Arthur Kleinman, Veena Das, and Margaret Lock, 261–284. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Farmer, Paul. 2006. *AIDS and Accusation: Haiti and the Geography of Blame*. Berkley, CA: University of California Press.
- Farmer, Paul E. Bruce Nizeye, Sara Stulac, Salmaan Keshavjee. 2006. Structural violence and clinical medicine. *PLoS Med* 3(10): e449.
- Fine, Gary Alan. 1979. Small groups and culture creation: the idioculture of Little League baseball teams. *American Sociological Review* 44 (5): 733–745.

- Foa, Anna. 2000. *The Jews of Europe after the Black Death*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press.
- Foucault, Michel. 1973. *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception*. London: Tavistock (orig. *Naissance de la clinique: une archéologie du regard médical*, Paris: Presses universitaires de France 1963).
- Fraser, Suzanne, Carla Treloar, Joanne Bryant, and Tim Rhodes. 2014. Hepatitis C prevention education needs to be grounded in social relationships. *International Drugs, Education, Prevention & Policy* 21 (1): 88–92.
- Gangestad, Steven W, Glenn J. Scheyd. 2005. The Evolution of Human Physical Attractiveness. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 34: 523–548.
- Gaibazzi, Paolo. 2014. Visa problem: certification, kinship, and the production of “ineligibility” in the Gambia. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 20 (1): 38–55.
- Georgevitch, T. R. 1918. The Killing of the Khazar Kings. *Folk-Lore: A Quarterly Review of Myth, Tradition, Institution, and Custom* 29 (3): 238–247<sup>18</sup>.
- Goodale, Mark. 2006. Toward a Critical Anthropology of Human Rights. *Current Anthropology* 47 (3): 485–511.
- Heintz, Monica (ed.). 2013. *The Anthropology of Moralities*. New York/Oxford: Berghahn.
- Harris, Magdalena, Bethan McDonald, Tim Rhodes. 2014. Hepatitis C testing for people who inject drugs in the United Kingdom. Why is uptake so low? *International Drugs, Education, Prevention & Policy* 21 (4): 333–342.
- Kelly, Tobias. 2012. Sympathy and suspicion: torture, asylum, and humanity. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 18 (4): 753–768.
- Kovač, Senka. 2006. Les signes du vieillissement. *Antropologija* 1: 19–25.
- Laidlaw, James. 2002. For an Anthropology of Ethics and Freedom. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 8 (2): 311–332.
- Lambek, Michael. 2000. The Anthropology of Religion and the Quarrel between Poetry and Philosophy. *Current Anthropology* 41 (3): 309–20.
- Long, Lynellyn D. 2004. Anthropological perspectives on the trafficking of women for sexual exploitation. *International Migration* 42 (1): 5–31.
- Lyon-Callo, Vincent. 2004. *Inequality, Poverty, and Neoliberal Governance: Activist Ethnography in the Homeless Sheltering Industry*, Toronto: Broadview.
- Malinowski, Bronislaw. 1948. *Magic, Science and Religion and Other Essays*. Selected, and with an Introduction by Robert Redfield. Glencoe, IL: The Free Press.
- Marrow, Jocelyn, Tanya Luhrmann. 2012. The Zone of Social Abandonment in Cultural Geography: On the Street in the United States, Inside the Family in India. *Culture, Medicine & Psychiatry* 36 (3): 493–513.

---

<sup>18</sup> Please note that it is an archaic English transcription of the name of Tihomir Đorđević from its Cyrillic variant *Тихомир Ђорђевић*. Đorđević’s text in that journal is also given with many of typing errors in toponyms, ethnonyms, and titles of Serbian publications. Đorđević was professor at my Department and member of then Serbian Royal Academy in the first half of the last century. He authored several more text in Serbian concerning *lapot*.

- Mishtal, Joanna. 2012. Irrational non-reproduction? The “dying nation” and the post-socialist logics of declining motherhood in Poland. *Anthropology & Medicine* 19 (2):153–169.
- Morson, Gary Saul. 1996. Misanthropology. *New Literary History* 27 (1): 57–72.
- Panter-Brick, Catherine. 2002. Street Children, Human Rights, and Public Health: A Critique and Future Directions. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 31: 147–171.
- Pavlovitch, Pavel. 2010. The Stoning of a Pregnant Adulteress from Juhayna: Three Early Evolution of a Muslim Tradition. *Islamic Law and Society* 17 (1): 1–62.
- Quesada, James, Laurie Kain Hart, Philippe Bourgois. 2011. Structural Vulnerability and Health: Latino Migrant Laborers in the United States. *Medical Anthropology* 30 (4): 339–362.
- Radcliffe-Brown, Alfred Reginald. 1945. Religion and Society. *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 75 (1/2): 33–43.
- Reischer, Erica, Kathryn S. Koo. 2004. The Body Beautiful: Symbolism and Agency in the Social World. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 33: 297–317.
- Rhodes, Tim, Milena Simic, Sladjana Baros, Lucy Platt and Bojan Žikić. 2008. Police violence and sexual risk among female and transvestite sex workers in Serbia: qualitative study. *BMJ* 337;a811.
- Ricoeur, Paul. 1969. *The Symbolism of Evil*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Scheper-Hughes, Nancy. 2008. A Talent for Life: Reflections on Human Vulnerability and Resilience. *Ethnos* 73 (1): 25–56.
- Schieffelin, Edward. 1976. *The Sorrow of the Lonely and the Burning of the Dancers*. New York: St Martin’s Press.
- Silverman, Eric K. 2004. Anthropology and Circumcision. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 33: 419–445.
- Singer, Merrill. 2004. The social origins and expressions of illness. *British Medical Bulletin* 69 (1): 9–19.
- Slobin, Dan I. 2003. “Language and thought online: cognitive consequences of linguistic relativity”. In *Language in Mind: Advances in the Study of Language and Thought*, eds. Dedre Gentner and Susan Goldin-Meadow, 157–192. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press
- Stroup, Timothy. 2014. “Looking backwards and forwards”. In *Westermarck*, ed. David Shankland, 106–115. Occasional Paper No. 44 of the Royal Anthropological Institute. Published in association with Anglo-Finnish Society. Canon Pyon: Sean Kingston Publishing.
- ten Dam, Casper. 2010. How to Feud and Rebel: 1. Violence-values among the Chechens and Albanians. *Iran and the Caucasus* 14 (2): 331–365.
- Vinh-Kim, Nguyen and Karine Peschard. 2003. Anthropology, Inequality, and Disease: A Review. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 32: 447–74.
- Vukomanović, Milan. 1992. Is There a Moral Justification for Fratricide?: The Ethical Dilemma of the *Bhagavadgita* and the *Mountain Wreath*. *Human Mosaic* 26 (2): 69–79.
- Widlok, Thomas. 2004. Sharing by Default?: Outline of an Anthropology of Virtue. *Anthropological Theory* 4 (1): 53–70.

- Winkelman, Michael. 1998. Aztec human sacrifice: Cross-cultural assessments of the ecological hypothesis. *Ethnology* 37 (3): 285–298.
- Žikić, Bojan. 2011. Društveni činioci zdravstvene vulnerabilnosti marginalizovanih društvenih grupa (engl. trans: Social Factors of Health Vulnerability of Marginalized Social Groups). *Etnoantropološki problemi* 6 (3): 783–805.
- Žikić, Bojan. 2015. What Makes People Good or Bad? (Mis)Anthropological Essay on Searching for Social/Cultural Reasons on Judging the Other People. *Issues in Ethnology and Anthropology* 10 (4): 927–943.

Bojan Žikić

Odeljenje za etnologiju i antropologiju,  
Filozofski fakultet, Univerzitet u Beogradu

*Зашто нам је потребна мизантропологија у антропологији?  
Есеј о разматрању могућности за успостављање  
субдисциплинарног истраживачког поља*

Пошаваши од Морсонове идеје мизантропологије као студије изопачености људске природе, ограничио сам тај појам на друштвени и културни живот, држећи да мизантропологијом треба сматрати доношење патње људима посредством утицаја друштва и културе. У том смислу, залажем се за антрополошко истраживање свега онога што би било супротно садржају појма *хуманитас*, или ономе што се сматра врлином у било ком друштвеном или културном контексту. Сматрам да је социокултурни контекст кључан за разумевање тога шта се у људским заједницама сматра да је морално, добро, позитивно, односно да је супротно свему томе, али и да патњу треба сагледати као објективну чињеницу чије постојање превазилази њену контекстуалну условљеност.

*Кључне речи:* мизантропологија, *хуманитас*, врлина, непочинство, друштво и култура

*Pourquoi avons-nous besoin de la misanthropologie dans l'anthropologie?  
Essai sur l'examen des possibilités d'établissement  
d'un champ de recherche sub-disciplinaire*

En prenant comme point de départ la conception de la misanthropologie adoptée par Morson, conception selon laquelle elle serait l'étude de la perversion de la nature humaine, j'ai limité cette notion à la vie sociale et culturelle, estimant qu'il faut considérer comme misanthropologie le fait d'infliger de la souffrance aux gens par le biais de l'influence de la société et de la culture.

En ce sens, je plaide pour une recherche anthropologique sur tout ce qui serait contraire au contenu de la notion de humanitas, ou de ce qui est considéré comme vertu dans n'importe quel contexte social ou culturel. J'estime que le contexte socioculturel est décisif pour comprendre ce qui est considéré dans les communautés humaines comme moral, bon, positif, ou bien de ce qui est considéré comme contraire; j'estime aussi qu'il faut également analyser la souffrance comme fait objectif dont l'existence dépasse son conditionnement contextuel.

*Mots clés:* misanthropologie, humanitas, vertu, méfait, société et culture

Primljeno / Received: 5.09.2016

Prihvaćeno / Accepted: 17.10.2016